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RED FORT AND MUGHAL LIFE

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by

Dr. N. L. Mathur

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प्राप्ति तिथि 24/5/62
State Museum, Library, Lko.

with a foreword by

Dr. Grace Morley

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FOREWORD

Any effort to provide accurate information on the history and daily life of the RED FORT is most welcome. The majesty and beauty of this great monument of Delhi, demand recall in concrete terms of the principal figures of its history, of the busy court life centred there, as well as of the sparkling flow and splash of its canals and fountains, to give it the dimensions of reality of the crowded, colourful Imperial activity for which it was the setting during two centuries of Delhi's history. The stately routine of the court, the daily ceremonial of officials, the bustle of courtiers coming and going with their retinues, the disciplined changing of guards and reviewing of troops, the fleeting glimpses of the ladies of the court, hidden from public view but always so influential, and the intimate details of the Emperor's day explain the arrangements of the vast structure. The careful provisions in the Fort for the public business and ceremony of the ruler of a vast domaine, with all the officers required to carry on government functions, and for the religious and private life of the Emperor and of his large family, with the nobles and officials needed to serve them, must be understood to be appreciated fully as both functional and monumental architecture. The explanations and illustrations of the use for which each part of the Fort was designed, drawn from contemporary accounts, represent a valuable contribution to thorough enjoyment of a visit there.

Dr. N. L. Mathur has gone to great pains to search out original records, accounts of travellers and foreign visitors to the Court and other primary contemporary sources of information. With their help he has recreated the daily life that went on in the Fort at different periods in every sphere of activity. His brief introductory historical survey establishes well the factual background and recalls the associations with those vivid personalities who lived there; his description of the plan of the Fort and the uses to which all parts of its vast complex of buildings were put, and then the descriptions of life there, with brief anecdotes and sketches of some of its personalities as reported by contemporaries, make the monument come alive for the attentive visitor. Not only tourists, but indeed all who love Delhi and desire to know better its past, have reason to feel thankful to Dr. Mathur for this illuminating description of its RED FORT.

GRACE MORLEY
Director, National Museum,
New Delhi.

22nd June, 1964

PREFACE

A historical building, whatever be its grandeur in the past, is nothing more than a pile of bricks, stone and mortar to an ordinary visitor unless he is told something abouts it antecedents. A word of explanation may bring to his imagination the splendour of even the crumbling walls, dimmed by the dust of ages. Numerous guide books on the Red Fort are available but none provides an adequate account of the life and court of the grand Mughals whose fabulous wealth had bewitched the people in distant countries and lured the adventurers to brave the dangers of the unknown seas in search of the fairy land. It is only with this background that the Fort which though now bereft of its former beauty and ornamentation still stands out in vivid colours of romance. I have presented in this booklet a brief description of the Fort and the palace, as well as a sketch of the daily life of the Emperor and the royal family, with a short history of the ruling dynasty. It is hoped that the information contained in this volume would enable the visitor to have a clearer impression of the monument and would secure a permanent place in his memory.

I am grateful to Dr. (Mrs) Grace Morley, Driector, National Museum, New Delhi, for writing a foreword to this treatise and also for permitting me to publish four paintings 'Wedding of a prince', 'A prince and a princess enjoying music', 'Schooling of princesses', 'A princess retires at night' from the collection of the National Museum. My thanks are due to the Director General of Archaeology for permitting me the use of two blocks of Diwan-i-Amm and Diwan-i-Khas. I have also to thank Shri Rai Krishnadasa, Director, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, for generous permission to use a colour block of the painting "A Mughal Lady" from his collection.

New Delhi
22nd June, 1964. N. L. MATHUR

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I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A visitor to Delhi will not fail to notice the rising walls of the Red Fort on the right bank of the river Jamuna near the old city of Delhi. Built by the Emperor Shahjahan, fifth in descent of the Mughal dynasty, during the years 1639-48, it symbolised for about two centuries the might and wealth of the Mughal Emperors and the world wondered at the beauty and magnificence of their palaces with gorgeous and tasteful decorations. The enormous amount of jewellery displayed by the royal family dazzled the vision of the people living in distant lands. They imagined that if there was any place in the world where the splendours of the Arabian Nights were still credible, where emeralds as big as an egg embellished the palaces with golden roofs, where female slaves had the voice of a nightingale and where the enchanted princesses surrounded by beautiful damsels in their lovely costumes of velvet and brocade sat on couches of gold studded with gems, it was within the red sand stone walls of this Fort.

It was during the year 1526, that Babar, the Great Mughal, a descendant of Tamerlane, marched to India at the head of a small army of veteran soldiers and having defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi, the King of Delhi at the battle of Panipat, occupied Delhi and later Agra where he held his court. Humayun, the son and successor of Babar, was expelled by Sher

Shah and forced to seek shelter in Persia. In 1555, Humayun regained the throne with the assistance of Shah Tahmasp, King of Persia, but died within six months of his success. His successors Akbar and Jahangir resided principally at Agra. The latter's son Shahjahan, desirous of shifting his capital to Delhi, laid the foundations of a palace for the royal family known as the Red Fort in 1639. The Fort was completed in 1648 and Shahjahan entered into it with a gorgeous retinue, prince Dara Shikoh scattering gold and silver over his father's head till he reached the gates. The palace buildings had already been decorated, and the courtyards covered with rich carpets and hangings. The Emperor signalised the occasion by the distribution of lavish gifts. The artistic and literary taste shown by the Emperor attracted to his court poets, philosophers, scholars, artists and artisans and henceforth the Fort at Delhi became a throbbing centre of royal activity.

Shahjahan had four sons—Dara, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad, and two daughters—Jahanara who favoured Dara and Roshanara who sided with Aurangzeb. While Dara stayed with his father, the other three sons held charge of viceroyalties in the provinces. Dara, the heir apparent, held the viceroyalty of the rich provinces of Allahabad, the Punjab and Multan. He enjoyed the lofty title of Shah Buland Iqbal and the unprecedented rank of a Commander of forty thousand horses. In court, he was allowed to be seated on a gold couch below the throne and every aspirant to office or title solicited his mediation with the Emperor. Jahanara, the eldest princess, was very beautiful and was passionately loved by her father. She enjoyed the title of *Begum Sahib* and received the most valuable gifts from the amirs, whose affairs were confided to her charge. She thus amassed a great fortune. Roshanara was very intriguing and kept Aurangzeb informed of all the doings at the court which enabled him to pave his way to the throne. At this time, the grandeur of the Mughal empire in India had reached its zenith of fame and all imaginable luxuries of the age marked the daily life of the royal family. The magnificence of the Court was such that tales of the Great Mughal reached remote parts of Europe, and inflamed the public imagination with visions of boundless wealth and the splendour of India.

Shahjahan had thus spent about eight years in this magnificent Fort, when in September, 1657, he suddenly fell ill. Immediately the wildest rumours spread throughout the empire that Shahjahan was dead. His sons set out to fight out their claims to the throne. In the contest, Aurangzeb was successful and was enthroned on the 21st July, 1658. Shahjahan was imprisoned at Agra and the other sons, including Dara's eldest son, were either executed or murdered. Jahanara chose to share her father's life-long captivity ; while Roshanara, who was a warm partisan of Aurangzeb, now occupied an exalted position in the palace.

Aurangzeb had five sons and five daughters. The sons were Sultan, Muazzam, Azam, Kam Baksh and Akbar. The eldest son Sultan had died when he was thirty-nine years of age. Akbar, after rebelling, first sided with the Rajputs and then fled to the Maratha court and thence to Persia. The daughters of Aurangzeb were Zeb-un-nissa, Zinat-un-nissa, Badr-un-nissa, Zubdat-un-nissa and Mihr-un-nissa. Zeb-un-nissa, the eldest was a very learned and accomplished lady. She had a great influence in the court over her imperial father. When she reached the age of 25, she was worshipped as the dominant star of the Mughals.

Aurangzeb was a puritan and noted for his rigid attachment to religion. His relations with the Rajputs got estranged and he was engaged for twenty-five years in fruitless campaigns in the Deccan, firstly against the two Shia kingdoms of Bijapur and Golcunda which he annexed and later against the Marathas whom he could not crush. Due to the long absence of the Emperor in the Deccan, the power-house of Mughal rule at Delhi slowly crumbled to pieces. Mughal nobles set about ensuring their own power and wealth leading to the collapse of the central power. The death of Aurangzeb on February 21, 1707 was the signal for disintegration of the mighty Mughal Empire.

The three surviving sons of Aurangzeb, Muazzam, Azam and Kam Baksh entered into a fratricidal quarrel for the throne of Delhi. Muazzam and Azam met in the battle field at Jajau, a few miles from Agra. Azam lost the day as well as his life. Muazzam then marched towards the Deccan and defeating Kam Baksh near Hyderabad ascended the throne under the title of Bahadur Shah. His death in 1712 was followed by the customary struggle for power. Jahandar Shah who secured the throne was given to a life of pleasure. He was completely under the influence of a dancing girl named Lal Kanwar. She was allowed to display the imperial umbrella and to march with drums beating as if she had been the Emperor in person. Grand illuminations were arranged three times every month and the prices of the commodities rose very high. Jahandar Shah was, however, deposed and strangled in the Fort in 1713 and Farrukhsiyar was elevated to the throne by the two Saiyyad brothers—Husain Ali and Abdullah—the king makers. After a few years, Farrukhsiyar was also blinded and executed in an ignonimous manner.

Muhammad Shah was then placed on the throne in 1719. He plunged into a life of pleasure and amusement and the administration was totally neglected. In 1739, Nadir Shah of Persia, marched to Delhi and was met with little resistance on the way. He established his quarters in the palace where he was entertained by Muhammad Shah. Within a few days of his stay in Delhi, a rumour spread in the city that Nadir Shah had been assassinated and this gave rise to a tumult in which some Persian soldiers were killed. To avenge it, Nadir Shah ordered a general massacre in which twenty thousand people—men, women and children—were killed. He spent many days in plundering the city and obtained from the Emperor, his nobles and the people, money, jewels and other objects estimated at 70 crores of rupees. He ultimately left Delhi carrying the booty, including the Peacock throne and the most famous and matchless diamond, the *Koh-i-noor*. In 1754, Muhammad Shah was deposed and blinded by the *Wazir*. Ahmed Shah, his son, was then placed on the throne but he was unable to cope with the disintegrating forces that had grown so alarmingly on all sides. In 1757, Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan King, invaded India, ransacked Delhi and carried away the booty valued at 12 crores of rupees. Ahmed Shah was also removed from the throne and Azizuddin, son of Jahandar Shah, known as Alamgir II, was enthroned. He was practically a prisoner in the hands of his *Wazir*, and an attempt to free himself from his control resulted in his ruin and he was put to death in 1759 by the latter's orders. Shah Jahan (III) was then proclaimed as Emperor.

In 1760, the Marathas occupied Delhi. Their chief, Sadashiv Bhao, entered the Fort and deposed the Mughal ruler, Shah Jahan III, and enthroned another phantom king. He took possession of all the property and goods that he could find in the old repositories of treasures and stores of the royal family. He also broke into pieces the silver ceiling of the *Diwan-i-Khas* and coined seventeen lacs of rupees out of it. Just then Ahmed Shah Abdali invaded India with a large army and inflicted a serious defeat on the Marathas in the battle fought at Panipat. Due to the hostility of the ambitious and unscrupulous nobles at the court at Delhi, Shah Alam the son and successor of Alamgir II, moved as a wanderer from place to place. In 1761, he regained the throne of his forefathers with the assistance of the Abdali. In 1787, Ghulam

Qadir, son of a Rohilla chief, who aspired to the position of the premier noble at the court of Delhi, negotiated with Shah Alam, to throw off the Maratha yoke. Forcing his entry into the Fort with a small body of troops, he disarmed the old king and with a dagger struck out one of his eyes, while his attendant deprived him of the other. The news of this awful deed leaked out and the Marathas soon appeared on the scene, pursued Ghulam Qadir and put him to death.

Shah Alam died in 1806 and was succeeded by his son Akbar II, who lived in Delhi with the title of Emperor till 1837. An English woman who gained admission to the royal *Zenana* about 1827 has given a pleasing and vivid picture as below :

"I was conducted to the Queen's *Mahal* (palace for females), where his Majesty and the Queen were awaiting my arrival. I found on my entrance the King seated in the open air in an arm chair enjoying his *hookka* ; the Queen's *masnud* was on the ground, close by the side of her venerable husband......... After having left my shoes at the entrance I advanced towards them, my *salaams* were tendered and then the usual offering of *nazar*, first to the King and then to the Queen, who invited me to a seat on her carpet.........The whole period of my visit was occupied in very interesting conversation, eager enquiries were made respecting England, the Government, the manners of the Court, the habits of the people, my own family affairs.........On taking leave His Majesty very cordially shook me by the hand, the Queen embraced me with warmth. Both appeared, and expressed themselves, highly gratified with the visit of an English Lady.........I was grieved to be obliged to accept the Queen's parting present of an embroidered scarf, because I know her means were exceedingly limited compared with the demands upon her bounty.........A small ring, of trifling value, was then placed by the Queen on my finger, as she remarked 'to remind me of the giver'. The King's countenance, dignified by age, possessed traces of extreme beauty.........The Queen's manners were very amiable and condescending; she is reported to be as highly gifted with intellectual endowments as I can affirm she is with genuine politeness."

On the death of his father, Bahadur Shah II ascended the throne. He remained for the most part in Delhi Fort as a pensioner of the East India Company and had nothing to do with the administration of the city and the country around it which remained in British hands. He was banished for life to Rangoon in 1858, for having sided with the people in their War of Independence against the British. He later died in Rangoon and was buried there.

II

THE FORT

In 1628, Shahjahan ascended the throne of Hindustan. Within the first ten years of his reign, he desired to remove his capital from Agra to Delhi, as according to Bernier, 'the excessive heat to which that city (Agra) is exposed during the summer rendered it unfit for the residence of a monarch.' Other reasons stated were, 'the broken ravines throughout the latter city, want of space in the Fort, narrowness of the streets, and the inconvenience caused to the inhabitants by the large crowds of troops and elephants and retinues of the Emperor and his Omrahs.' Perhaps his passion for splendour and the extravagance of his tastes, led him to found a city. It is equally probable that Shahjahan desired to perpetuate his memory by building a new Capital there. Before deciding upon a site for his new metropolis, Shahjahan paid several visits to the neighbourhood and critically reviewed remains of those ancient capitals that had flourished at Indraprastha of the five Pandava princes, the Delhi of Prithvi Raj, Tughlaqabad, Jahan Panah, Siri and Firozabad. After consultations with various astrologers and sages, he approved a site on the mainland on the west bank of the Jamuna and south of a fortification nearby, the still surviving Salimgarh, built nearly a century ago by Sultan Salim Shah Suri to guard the fords of the Jamuna against an attempt by Humayun to regain his throne. The stars and planets pointing to Friday, the 9th Maharram, A.H. 1048

(1638 A.D.) as auspicious for the purpose, the foundation stone of the Fort was laid on that date. Nine years later the work was completed.

This magnificent royal residence, the finest of its kind, was constructed under the supervision of Makramat Khan, Superintendent of Works, at an estimated cost of 100 lacs of rupees, excluding the expenses for the building material which was supplied by the Governors of various provinces. It had a number of enclosures, one for disposal of official work, i.e. for public and private *darbars* ; another for the palaces of the Emperor and the royal family ; and a separate enclosure for royal store-rooms, regalia chambers, kitchens, horse and elephant stables, houses of the enormous retinue attached to the court, various departments of the royal house-hold, a large number of well-organized factories manufacturing articles for royal use. There was also the Imperial Secretariat and various departments for disposal of official work. The palaces enclosed a garden intersected into flower beds by water courses with an ornamental fountain in the middle. Their outside crowned the sandstone ramparts with a succession of turrets, gilt domes, hanging balconies, arcades and perforated screens, which were remarkably picturesque and breathed the very spirit of romance.

The original plan of the palace was as follows :—"From the Lahori Gate there ran eastwards a succession of buildings and courts devoted to the more public ceremonies of the Emperor. Along the top of the eastern wall, above the river, were his private apartments, in a line from north to south—baths, hall of private audience, sleeping apartments and *zenana*. The first line, meeting the second at right angles, formed and still forms, a T-shaped arrangement. These buildings remain tolerably intact. The spaces westwards of the two arms of the top of the T were filled with subsidiary courts and buildings—kitchens, store-houses, etc. Northwards (the northern arm of the T being longer than the southern) were the gardens, called the Hayat Baksh (giver of life) and Mehtab Bagh (garden of the Moon) ; and adjoining the northern wall, were the houses of the royal princes. Running northwards from the Delhi Gate and forming, so to speak, the base of the parallelogram of which the top or eastern side is the river frontage, was a broad road lined with the houses of retainers, shops, etc."

This great citadel, unfortunately got damaged and was shorn much of its grandeur during the later Mughals owing to constant struggle for power. A number of palaces, courts and gardens were removed soon after the War of Independence in 1857. The spacious halls of the *Karkhanajat* (factories), the royal stores and stables have disappeared. The existing buildings in the Fort too have lost their original beauty and ornamental work.

The Fort is an irregular octagon in plan. In circumference, it is about a mile and a half, with 3,200 feet from north to south and 1,800 feet from east to west, enclosed by a formidable wall. It has two main entrances, called the Lahori Gate, facing Chandni Chowk, and the Delhi Gate, facing the city of Delhi. Two gigantic elephants carrying the two stone figures of the Raja of Chitor, Jaimal and his brother Pattah, who had put up a determined resistance to Akbar, stood at the entrance of the Delhi Gate. The Fort has around it a moat, 75 feet wide and 30 feet deep, which was filled with water in the event of war. Adjoining the moat were large gardens, full of variegated flowers and green shrubs.

Square

Next to the gardens, was a large square which presented a brilliant spectacle at the time of a *darbar*. Men, women and children clad as for a feast thronged the place. Elephants and young bulls in their best trappings were brought there for display. Little bells rang from the collars of the animals and there was a clang of brass ornaments from the ankles and wrists of the women. An odour of saffron and musk of aloes and sandalwood floated in the air. Princes, *omrahs*, *rajas*, nobles and high military officials arrived at the Fort with streaming standards and large escort, some on horse-back and the others on majestic elephants. Many of them carried in richly decorated palanquins were seen chewing betels while leaning against a thick cushion of brocade. On one side of every palanquin, a servant walked with a spittoon of porcelain or silver, and on the other, two servants fanned their lord or flapped away the flies with a peacock's tail fan. Three or four footmen marched in front to clear the way, and a few brilliantly mounted horsemen followed the palanquin. Dancing girls in gorgeous attire moving on towards the *darbar* were seen in glimpses behind the silk nets of the palanquins. Huge elephants, painted in black with silver bells and white cow tails from Tibet hanging down from their ears, passed on majestically between small elephants.

Chatta Chowk

Entering through the Lahori Gate, there was the roofed street which was described by Fergusson "as the noblest entrance to any existing palace." On its two sides were two storeyed shops. Here merchants sold their wares to the nobles of the court.

Courtyard

At the end of the *Chatta Chowk* was an open courtyard, with a beautiful tank in its centre and a strong balcony around it. In its south-west corner stood some public buildings where the

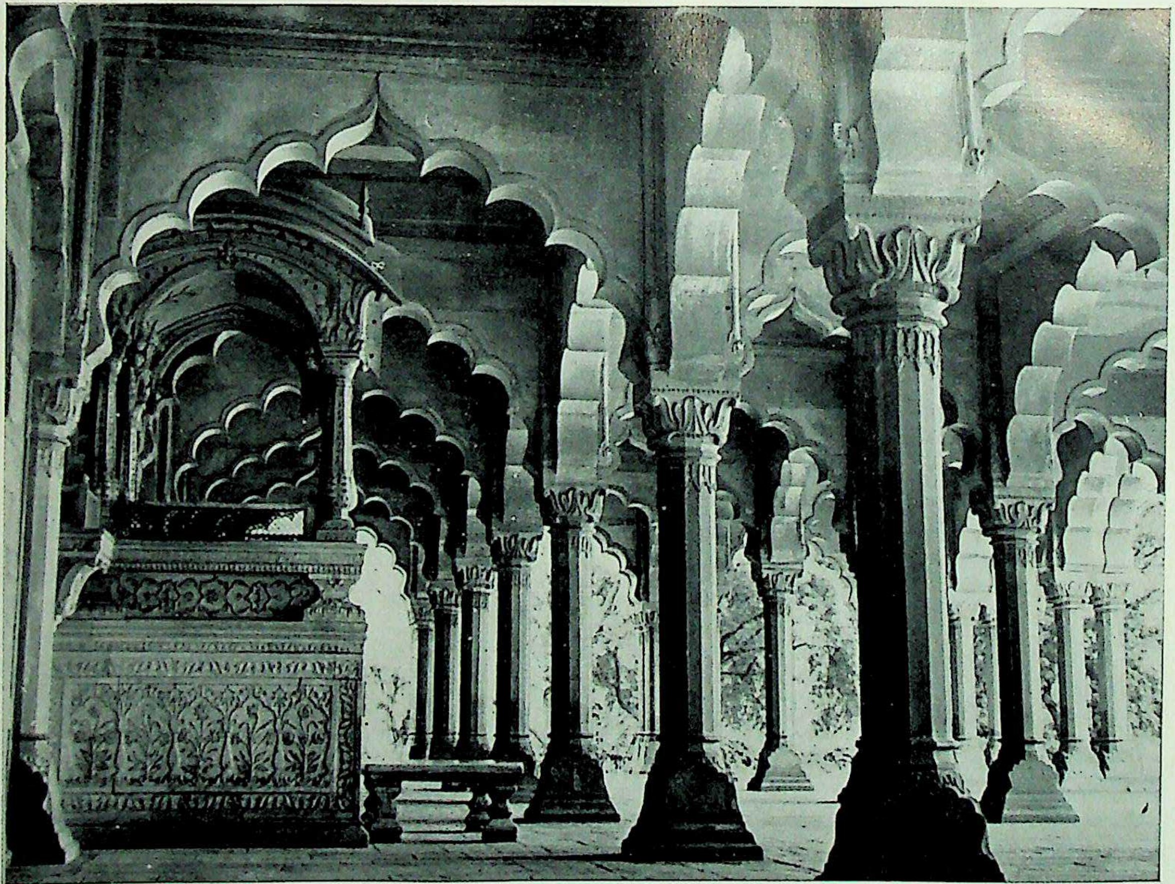
Emperor's *Nazir* (Superintendent of the House-hold) conducted business. From the courtyard to the Delhi Gate, were the arcaded streets where the officers of the lower rank transacted business and mounted guard during the night.

Naubat Khana

The *Naubat Khana* (the Royal Drum House or the Music Gallery) was separated from the rest of the courtyard by a stone railing. All persons admitted to the palace, except the princes of the royal blood, had to dismount here to proceed to the Emperor's presence on foot. Even in the last days of the titular Mughal Emperor, this entrance was jealously guarded. A British Resident of Delhi who violated the sanctity of the Royal palace by riding under the gate-way of the *Naubat Khana*, was removed from his appointment. The music gallery is a handsome and well-proportioned building. It has a fine archway through the centre, and a large open gallery, 99′ long and 68′ broad, for the musicians. Robes of honour conferred by the Emperor were placed in side rooms and were carried from there through the assembled crowd to the *Darbar* Hall. The royal band played five times a day. The music was on for the whole day on Sundays, as it was a day sacred to the sun. Similarly, music was provided on the day of the week on which the reigning king was born.

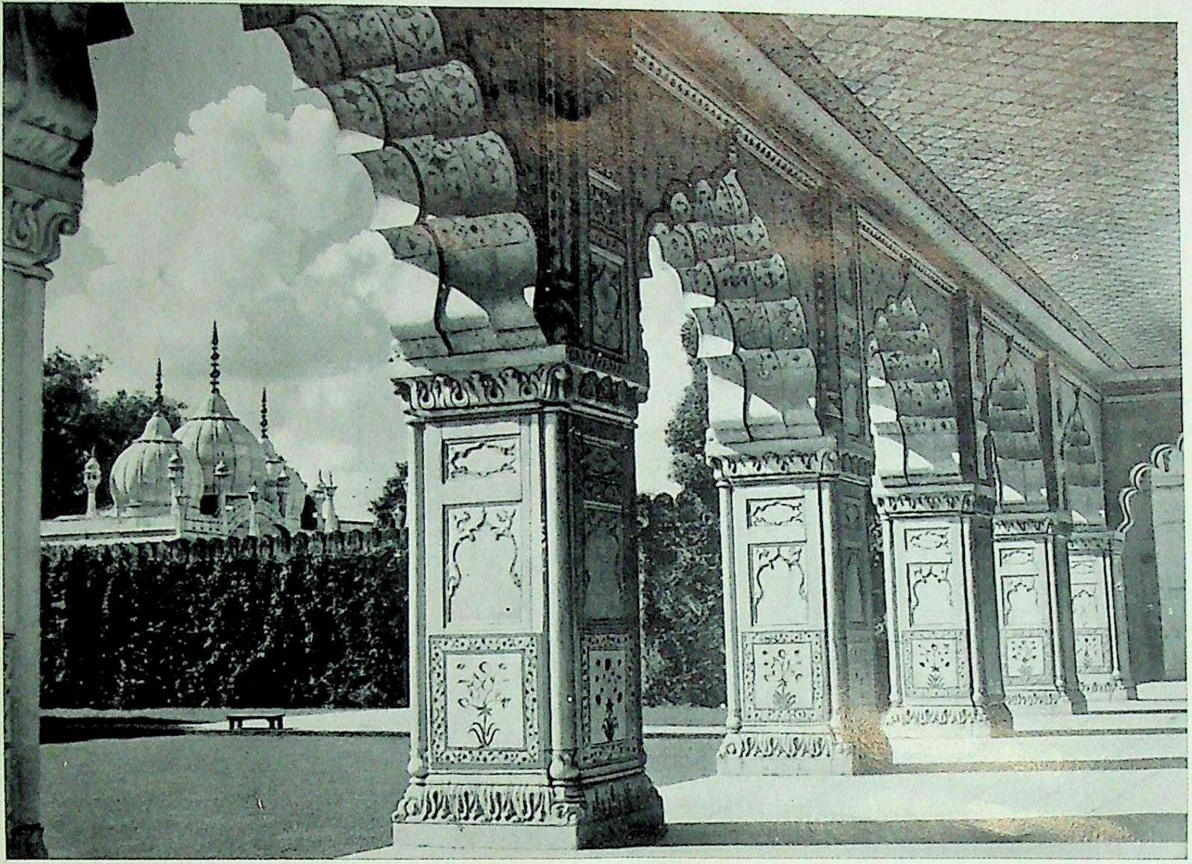
Diwan-i-Amm

Inside the *Naubat Khana* is the court of the *Diwan-i-Amm*. It was originally 550′ × 300′ in area and on its two side were arcaded apartments raised almost 3½′ from the ground. Each bay of the arcade was separated by a wall, with a provision for a small door to pass from one apartment to another. These rooms were occupied by the *Omrahs* who decorated them on special occasions and vied with each other in adorning them



Diwan-i-Amm

Plate II



Diwan-i-Khas

with a profusion of the richest tapestry, velvets and silks.

The hall of audience measures 80′ × 40′ and stands on a stone plinth 4′ high. It was once richly painted and over-laid with gold. It was known as the *Chihalstoon*, or forty-pillared hall. In the centre of the back wall of the hall was the recess for the royal throne, in front of which stood or were seated the principal grandees of the court, separated from the rest of the hall by a silver railing. Under the recess is the marble platform, measuring about 7′ × 3′ standing on which the *Wazir* or his secretaries could hand over the petitions to the king. On special occasions the Peacock throne was brought from the *Diwan-i-Khas* and placed in the recess. Set in the recess in the centre of the back wall, was a marble baldachine known as the *Nashiman-i-Zilli-llahi* (the seat of the shadow of God), inlaid with precious stones. Behind the Emperor's throne, there is some mosaic work done by a French artist Austin de Bordeaux representing beautiful birds, flowers and fruits in the most natural manner. One of the figures represents *Orpheus* sitting under a tree and fiddling to a herd of animals, sitting in a circle. In front of the *Diwan-i-Amm*, a space was enclosed by a red stone railing ornamented by gilded spikes, and this enclosure was called *Gul-i-Bari*, and was allotted to the minor officials of the court. The general throng stood outside the last enclosure to have a view of the *darbar*. Shahjahan and Aurangzeb sat in this hall twice a day on most of the days of the week to conduct business of Government. It, however, fell into disuse during the later Mughals who led a life of ease and neglected the State work. The last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II, held the daily *darbar* in this hall during the War of Independence of 1857.

Mumtaz Mahal

The *Mumtaz Mahal*, now the Museum, is the southern most of the buildings in the Fort. It was one of the apartments of the royal princesses.

Rang Mahal

The *Rang Mahal*, measuring $153\frac{1}{2}' \times 59\frac{1}{4}'$, is immediately to the north of the *Mumtaz Mahal*. On account of its coloured decoration, it came to be called *Rang Mahal*. Its original ceiling was of silver but Shahjahan had it gilded and ornamented with golden flowers. It was then known as the *Imtiyaz Mahal* (Palace of distinction) and surpassed in lustre and colour all other palaces in the Fort. Farrukhsiyar had the silver ceiling removed and replaced by one of copper. In the reign of Akbar II, this was also taken off and a wooden ceiling was put up instead. Five screened windows in its back wall overlooked the river and through these the *begums* and princesses had the glimpses of the fights of elephants and other wild beasts which were arranged on the sandy ground at the foot of the walls. The Emperor watched these from the adjoining *Muthamman Burj*.

It had a tank made of marble and fashioned like a flower in bloom. It was exquisitely inlaid with coloured stones set in design of floral and foliage. When the tank was full of rippling water, the foliage of the inlay work appeared to wave to and fro. In its centre was a beautiful cup shaped like a flower of marble. On each curving point and arch, were flowers and leaves with creeping plants of coloured stones. Within the cup was a hole through which the water bubbled up from a hidden channel below. The sheet of water falling from the edges of the cup and the waving of the plants and flowers under the dancing water presented a scene of magic.

Khas Mahal

To the north of the *Diwan-i-Khas* is a set of three marble apartments, the *Tasbih-Khana* (or the house of Worship), the *Khwab-Gah* (or the Bed Chamber), and the *Baithak* (or the Conversation House), communicating with one another, through arched doors in the central room. The walls were at one time inlaid with precious stones. A pair of scales was suspended over a stone seat to indicate that justice alone was administered there. The north and south walls of the centre room have arched doors covered with marble screens, and under the arches are inscribed legends of historical importance. A rhapsodist sat before the bed chamber of the great Mughal, telling tales in a loud voice. A simple curtain hung between him and the king who lay on a couch.

Muthamman Burj

To the east of the *Khwab-Gah* is the *Muthamman Burj*, a tower which the Emperor visited daily at dawn to appear before the crowds gathered below the Fort. This ceremony was considered an essential part of the daily routine observed by the earlier Mughal Emperors. Its apartments were decorated with gold, exquisite paintings and magnificent mirrors. Akbar II had added a small covered balcony to it and engraved two inscriptions under its arches.

Diwan-i-Khas

The *Diwan-i-Khas* is a magnificent pavilion built of fine marble. It stands on a plinth of 4½′ and measures 90′ × 67′. Its ceiling, originally of silver, was inlaid with precious gems and was supported by thirty-two richly carved pillars. It was considered to be the most profusely ornamented of all Shahjahan's buildings. Over an arch in the central hall an inscription in Persian runs as : *'Gar Fiardaus bar rue zamin ast, Hamin ast, Hamin ast, wa Hamin ast'* (if a paradise be on the face of the earth it is here, it is here and it is here). A white marble slab supported Shahjahan's famous *Takhat-e-Taus* (the Peacock Throne) valued at nearly 18 crores of rupees. This magnificent throne was constructed in the reign of Shahjahan under the superintendence of Bebadal Khan in seven years. The throne was shaped like a bedstead on golden legs. Its enamelled canopy was supported by twelve emerald pillars, each of which bore two peacocks encrusted with gems. A tree covered with diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls stood between the pairs of peacocks. Three steps led to one of the longer sides of the throne, on which were three golden cushions, around which were suspended a mace, a shield, a bow and a quiver for arrows. The tail of the peacock was made of sapphires and other coloured stones, the body being of gold inlaid with precious stones. This gorgeous structure remained in use until 1739 i.e till the reign of Muhammad Shah when it was carried off by the Persian invader Nadir Shah.

After his morning *darbar* in the *Diwan-i-Amm*, the Emperor sat on the throne in this Hall to hold confidential discussions with high officials and transacted important business of the State. In this Court, the *Omrahs* and nobles of the highest rank waited on the Emperor.

Hamam or the royal bath

Near the *Diwan-i-Khas* is the *Hamam*, the bath room for the royal family. The two rooms on either side of the *Hamam* were used as the bath for the royal children. There were three main apartments which were divided by corridors. A room facing the river was the dressing room and contained two fountain basins, one of which was for the use of 'rose water spray.' The second apratment had a basin in the centre only. This could be used both for hot and cold baths. It is said that 125 maunds of firewood was required to heat the water. All these apartments were built in fine marble and inlaid with precious and rare stones of various colours, representing flowers and branches, executed with great taste. The fountains were placed in the centre, with passages to carry water into different apartments and light was admitted through windows with stained glass. The baths were a favourite resort of the Mughal Emperors and business of the most important character was transacted here.

Moti Masjid or the Pearl Mosque

On the northern side of the baths is the *Moti Masjid*, or the Pearl Mosque. It is built of white marble on a plinth 3½′ in height. It measures 40′×30′ and is 25′ high. Its entrance is made of brass gates which appear to be the work of an Italian artificer. (The original domes of the mosque, made of heavily gilded copper, were destroyed during the War of Independence and later on, the existing marble domes were added). The mosque was built by Aurangzeb in 1662 to enable him to offer prayers at various times of the day and night without undertaking a journey to the *Jama Masjid* which stands at a distance outside the Fort.

Hira Mahal

The small white marble building is situated on the north of the *Hamam*. It measures 22½′×19½′ and has three open arches on each side. It was built in 1842 by the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah in order to enjoy the river scene from this place.

Shah Burj or the King's Tower

This building is situated at the north-eastern corner of the Fort, measuring 63′×32′ and is lined with marble. It is three-storeyed, and presents a fine view. The Mughal emperors used to hold secret talks with their ministers in this tower. The centre of its northern wall is occupied by a marble water cascade which slopes into a scalloped marble basin. In 1784, Jawan Bakht, the eldest son of Shah Alam made his escape from this *Burj* by a ladder of turbans and eluded the vigilance of his father's ministers.

Gardens

Within the palace walls were two large gardens called the *Hayat Baksh* or life giving garden and the *Mahtab Bagh* or Moon garden. These gardens formed two separate enclosures treated in one design. Each was a square of about five hundred feet.

The Hayat Baksh garden was like the garden of Eden and was known for its beautiful flowers of purple or red in line. The Love-lies-a-bleeding in purple, the marigold in saffron, the roses in crimson colour, the rhododendrons and the violet grey holitropes gave a glow to the entire palace garden and their delicate aroma created a heavenly atmosphere. In the centre of the garden was a reservior through which 49 silver jets rose, while 112 silver jets, set around it, burst forth constantly. The four sides of the tank had six yards broad channel with 30 fountains playing in each.

The Moon Garden had only white flowers and the whole atmosphere was laden with the scent of jasmine and tuberose, of lily and narcassus. The double row of cypresses stood on either side of the road and the white lotus flowers shone like kindly stars from the water mirror of the large fountain.

Sawan and Bhadon

On the left and right sides of the Hayat Baksh garden there are two charming buildings known as 'Sawan' and 'Bhadon'. The Sawan was named after the first and Bhadon after the second month of the rainy season. In the walls of these pavilions there are tanks. Through the two water ways of the tanks in the centre of the building, water was constantly running and falling into the tank below in the form of a cascade. In the niches, flower vases were placed during the day and white candles at night to create an impression of the rainy season.

Zafar Mahal or Jal Mahal

Between the Sawan and Bhadon, a red sand stone pavilion stands in the centre of the main tank. It was built by the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II, 'Zafar' was his poetical suffix.

Naher-i-Bahisht

In planning the construction of the Fort, arrangements were ensured for a full and continuous supply of water throughout the entire enclosure. A canal known as the *Naher-i-Bahisht* or canal of Paradise was brought from the river Jamuna near Khizrabad, a distance of 50 miles into the Fort through a sluice under the *Shah Burj* or King's Tower, at the north east corner. The canal was originally constructed by Feroz Shah in 1291 and after his death it became dry. Shahjahan ordered it to be cleared and brought to Fort at Delhi. Ali Mardan, the famous engineer, of the time drew the canal to Delhi, first by way of Gohana, along a natural depression, now occupied by a main drain, and when this failed, by way of Panipat and Sonepat. The cost of the work is reported to have been very great, and the canal ran into the palace, divided and intersected every part and fell into the moats of the fortification. Such a constant stream enabled the chain of gardens to be ornamented with fountains, cascades, water-falls and pools enchantingly deposed and designed and also furnished the *Haman* (bath) adjacent to the palace, with its requirements. Bernier, who saw the *zanana* quarters during the King's absence from Delhi, says that, "nearly every chamber has its reservoir of running water at its door; on every side are gardens, delightful alleys, shady retreats, streams, fountains, grottos, deep excavations that afford shelter from the sun by day, lofty *divans* and terraces, on which to sleep cool at night."

Salim Garh

Close to the Fort was a citadel known as *Salim Garh*. It was built in 1546 by Salim Shah, son and successor of Sher Shah Suri. The whole circuit of the walls is about three quarters of a mile. During Mughal days, the *Salim Garh* served the purpose of a state prison. Akbar II had preserved a garden in this Fort and occasionally used to take an airing undisturbed by the public.

III

THE EMPEROR

The most important figure in this magnificent Fort was the Emperor. He had a commanding personality with dignified and majestic appearance. He wore a long shirt (*Jama*) normally coming down to the ankles, a *pajama* tied by a string with tassels at the waist and a turban embellished with pearls, gems and jewels, and an aigrette adorning its front part. A bejewelled dagger hung from his waist. The jewellery which Shahjahan ordinarily had on his person was valued at two crores and was kept in the harem in charge of female servants, while another three crores worth was in the custody of slaves in the outer apartments. The sarpech or aigrette of large rubies which he wore in his turban was estimated to be twelve lacs. The ministers, high military officials and petty chiefs waited on him and a large retinue followed him at all hours and at all times and waited outside when he entered the harem or the secret chambers. Later Mughals lost much of the lustre that surrounded Shahjahan and Aurangzeb and were left only with a semblance of the regal authority. Shahjahan and Aurangzeb led a strenuous life and devoted a good amount of their time to looking after the administration of the State as may be gleaned from their daily routine described in detail below. The successors of Aurangzeb, however, did very little work and the state fell into disorder.

Morning Prayer

The Emperor woke up about two hours before sun-rise. After his daily morning ablutions he spent some time in religious devotion.

Appearance at the Balcony

His first work was to appear after sun-rise at the balcony facing the bank of the river Jamuna. Vast crowds of expectant people, soldiers, traders, merchants, artisans and peasants all alike assembled on the bank every morning. They greeted the Emperor with the cry 'Long Live the King'. Shahjahan usually sat in the balcony for about forty-eight minutes or more or less as business required. Here, people could submit their petitions or present their cases without undergoing a formal procedure. The king did not deal with the cases on the spot. The clerks of the Judicial Department took notes and laid them before the king in *Diwan-i-Khas*, or *Diwan-i-Amm*. After a public salute, military officers would pass their contingents for review. The newly captured elephants which could not be brought into the courtyard facing the hall of Public Audience, were also shown to the Emperor. Thereafter, the elephant fights took place, whenever the Emperor so desired.

At Diwan-i-Amm

After spending an hour in the balconies, the Emperor turned his steps towards the *Diwan-i-Amm* where he held a *darbar*. In the centre of the wall that separated the hall from the palace was the celebrated *Jharokha* where the Emperor took his seat on a cushioned throne. On his right and left stood the princes and some of his grandsons. The royal standard bearers holding the golden banners were drawn up on the Emperor's left with their backs to the wall. Trusted eunuchs stood behind him flapping flies and fanning the royal person with large fans of peacock feathers. Just below the balcony, in a square bounded by rails of gold stood the *Wazir*. The rest of the hall bounded by silver rails was occupied by the nobles of the realm, the *Rajas* and ambassadors, high military officers in their resplendent attire, all standing in order of precedence with their eyes towards the floor and their hands crossed. Below the hall stood the *Mansabdars*, *Jagirdars* and other persons of rank under a canopy of gold cloth supported by bars of silver and bounded on all sides with silver railings. The gates were closely guarded by the trustworthy male bearers and sergeants-at-arms in their splendid uniforms. After the Emperor had sat on the throne, the business of the court began.

The Paymaster-General reported to the Emperor the petitions of military officers. He ushered into the royal presence those who deserved promotion, and solicited the Emperor's orders for giving promotions to some, new posts to others. Then the chief minister brought to his notice the cases of the poor and destitute, and introduced the learned and the pious. Thereafter, other departmental heads placed the papers before the Emperor. Influential officers in the Court submitted representations from the provincial governors. Clerks of the Department of Crown lands obtained orders on their various proposals through their chiefs. Letters from princes and chief officers were read or heard. Next, officers of the Imperial stables displayed horses and elephants in order to show whether they were properly fed or not. Bernier has left an excellent account of the ceremonials for which the *Diwan-i-Amm* was used : "During the hour and a half, or two hours, that this ceremony (the *darbar*) continues, a certain number of the royal horses pass before the throne, that the King may see whether they are well used and in a proper condition. The elephants come next, their filthy hides having been well washed and painted as black as ink, with two large red streaks from the top of the head down to the trunk, where they meet. The elephants are covered with embroidered cloth ; a couple of silver bells are suspended to the two ends of a massive silver chain placed over their back, and white cow-tails from Great Tibet, of large value, hang from the ears like immense whiskers. Two small elephants, superbly caparisoned, walk close to these colossal creatures, like slaves appointed to their service. As if proud of his gorgeous attire and of the magnificence that surrounds him, every elephant moves with a solemn and dignified step ; and when in front of the throne, the driver, who is seated on his shoulder, pricks him with a pointed iron, animates and speaks to him, until the animal bends on one knee, lifts his trunk on high and roars aloud, which the people consider as the elephant's mode of performing the *taslim* or usual reverence.

"Other animals are next introduced—tame antelopes kept for the purpose of fighting with each other ; *Nilgaux*, or grey oxen, that appear to me to be a species of elk ; rhinoceroses ; large *Bengale* bufalloes with prodigious horns which enable them to contend against lions and tigers ; tame leopards, or panthers, employed in hunting antelopes ; some of the fine sporting dogs from Usbec, of every kind, and each dog with a small red covering ; lastly, every species of the birds of prey used in the field sports for catching partridges, cranes, hares, and even, it is said, for hunting antelopes, on which they pounce with violence, beating their heads and blinding them with their wings and claws."

"Besides this procession of animals, the cavalry of one or two *Omrahs (Umaras)* frequently pass in review before the king ; the horsemen being better dressed than usual, the horses furnished with iron armour, and decorated with an endless variety of fantastic trappings."

"The King takes pleasure also in having the blades of cutlasses tried on dead sheep, brought before him without the entrails and neatly bound up. Young *Omrahs*, *Mansebdars*, and *Gourze-berdars* or mace-bearers, exercise their skill and put forth all their strength to cut through the four feet, which are fastened together, and the body of the sheep at one blow."

On important occasions the palace buildings were ornamented with gorgeous carpets and hangings of velvet and silk. The famous peacock throne was brought to the *Diwan-i-Amm* and placed in the balcony. It was provided with a special canopy, fringed with pearls, and supported by golden pillars, wreathed with bands of studded gems. The seats for the chief officers of the State in the hall were covered with deep red Kashmir shawls. As the Emperor entered the hall and mounted the throne, the Imperial band sent out joyous notes, the musicians began their songs, the nautch girls began their dance. The royal attendants sprinkled scented water on the assembled throng. Trays of betel (*pan*) were distributed to all. The air was charged with fragrance of *attar*, musk and ambergris. After the *darbar*, the Emperor returned to the *harem* and held another court there, at which the *begums*, princesses, wives of nobles and other ladies surrounded him. They offered their dutiful congratulations and scattered large quantities of gold and silver, pearls and jewels in honour of the Emperor, while he made rich presents to them in return.

At Diwan-i-Khas

A little before 10.00 a.m., the Emperor repaired to the *Diwan-i-Khas* or the Hall of Private Audience. Here he sat on the throne and met a few selected persons and transacted business of a confidential nature. He wrote with his own hand answers to the most important letters. Replies to letters received from the provincial governors were drafted by the ministers in accordance with instructions given by the Emperor. The drafts were revised and corrected by him, written out fair and sent to the *harem* to be sealed by the Great Seal, of which the Empress held the charge. The highest revenue officers then reported on very important matters connected with the crown lands and obtained orders on each case. The Head Almoner (Royal Charity Department) brought to notice special cases of needy persons ; most of them received cash grants, some lands and others daily stipends. A short time was spent in inspecting the works of skilful artisans such as jewel-setters, enamellers, etc. Plans of royal buildings were also examined before him.

At Shah Burj

At about half past eleven, the Emperor left the *Diwan-i-Khas* and entered the lofty *Shah Burj* or Royal Tower. The business of most confidential nature was conducted here and only princes and a few trusted officers were invited to it. The servants had to stand outside, till they were sent for.

In the Harem at Noon

About noon, the Emperor entered the harem. Here he performed the *Zuhar* prayer, ate his meals, and took a nap for an hour. He also attended to the affairs of ladies of the harem, dealt with the petitions of widows and orphans, poor maidens, theologians and scholars. He gave lands to some, pensions or donations to others, and garments, jewels and money as dowry to maidens too poor to marry.

After-Noon Audience

At about 3 p.m., the Emperor performed his *asar* prayer. Sometimes he visited the *Diwan-i-Amm* or the Hall of Public

Audience again where a little state business was gone through in a short time.

Soiric in the Diwan-i-Khas

In the evening, the *Diwan-i-Khas* was beautifully lighted. Scented candles in gold and silver candle-sticks studded with precious stones added to the lustre of the beautiful hall. The Emperor would spend about two hours here, listening to music-vocal and instrumental.

Secret Council Again

The assembly broke up for the night prayers at about 8.00 p.m. and if any business was still left to be done, the King returned to the *Shah Burj*. He summoned the grand *Wazir* and completed it. This closed the business of the day and thus ended the crowded programme of the Emperor.

Music and Reading in the Harem

At about 8.30 p.m., the Emperor retired to the female apartments and enjoyed music in the company of the ladies for about an hour. Then he entered his bed-room where story-tellers, and readers with good voices sat behind a *purdah* and read aloud works on travel, lives of saints and prophets, and histories of former kings. Finally after 10.00 p.m., he fell asleep and enjoyed a night's repose of six hours.

Court of Justice

The Emperor had set apart a day for personally attending to judicial cases. On that day no *darbar* was held in the *Diwan-i-Amm*, but the Emperor came direct from the *Jharokha* to the Private Audience Hall at about 8.00 a.m. No one except the officers of the judicial department and persons entrusted with the duties of giving the *Fatwah* (decision) and a few *ulemas* (canon-lawyers) noted for learning, piety and honesty were admitted. The business was transacted according to a definite and set programme. The officers presented the plaintiffs one by one and reported their grievances. The Emperor then ascertained the facts by inquiry and taking advice of the *ulemas* pronounced the judgment. Many would come from far off provinces to get justice from the highest power in the land. Their complaints could not be investigated except locally. In such cases the Emperor wrote orders to the governors of these places, urging them to find out the truth and either do justice there or send the parties back to the capital, with their reports.

Splendour of the Court

Bernier gives the following account of the splendour of the court of Aurangzeb:

'The King appeared, seated upon his throne, at the end of the great Hall, in the most magnificent attire. His vest was of white and delicately flowered satin, with a silk and gold embroidery of the finest texture. The turban, of gold cloth, had an aigrette whose base was composed of diamonds of extraordinary size and value, besides an oriental *topaz* exhibiting a lustre like the sun. A necklace of immense pearls, suspended from his neck, reached the stomach. At the foot of the throne were assembled all the *Omrahs*, in splendid apparel, upon a platform surrounded by a silver railing, and covered by a spacious canopy of brocade, with deep fringes of gold. The pillars of the hall were hung with brocades of a gold ground, and flowered satin canopies were raised over the whole expanse of the extensive apartment fastened with red silken cords, from which were suspended large tassels of silk and gold. The floor was covered entirely with carpets of the richest silk, of immense length and breadth. A tent was pitched outside, larger than the hall, to which it joined by the top. It spuad over half the court and was completely enclosed by a great balustrade, covered with plates of silver. Its supporters were pillars overlaid with silver, three of which were as thick and as high as the masts of a *barque*, the other smaller. The outside of this magnificent tent was red, and the inside lined with elegant *Maslipatm* chintzes, figured expressly for that very purpose with flowers so natural and colours so vivid, that the tent seemed to be encompassed into fine *parterres*. As to the arcade galleries round the court, every *Omrah* had received orders to decorate one of them at his own expense, and there appeared a spirit of emulation who should best acquit himself to the Monarch's satisfaction. Consequently, all the arcades and galleries were covered from top to bottom with brocade, and the pavement with rich carpets.'

On gala days the building of the *Diwan-i-Khas* was tastefully decorated. Costly vases of gold filled with fragrant flowers exhaling perfumes were arranged in order. Innumerable golden lamps fed with perfumed oil diffused a delicious odour and a dazzling shimmer through embellished Hall and invested it with a heavenly charm. On the occasion of *Nav Roz*, the anniversary celebration, the two *Ids*, the *Shab-i-Barat*, and the Solar and Lunar weighings of the Emperor, the *amirs* appeared in splendid apparel. The Emperor bedecked with a mass of diamonds, pearls, and other precious stones, sat on his magnificent throne, accepted presents and bestowed rewards. The minstrels and choristers, with ready turned instruments were in attendance to sing in concert. Dancing girls dressed in costly attire and wearing precious jewels stood up in two rows in a respectful attitude. As they danced with the music, their richly embroidered scarfs wafted fragrance converting the Hall into an earthly paradise.

Imperial Porcession

Whenever the Emperor returned to the Capital after a long campaign, he entered it with all show and gaiety. He would camp in a suburb of Delhi, from where the procession started. First marched the band, making a deafening clangour of kettle drums, tambourines, big brass drums, brazen pipes and trumpets. Then came huge elephants, richly caparisoned in gold and silver. Each carried on its back an Imperial standard. Then were led a troupe of choice horses, of the Persian and Arab breed, decorated lavishly with gold and jewellery. Behind them were female elephants and dromedaries. Then marched infantry, consisting of musketeers and rocketmen, carrying flashing blades. Surrounded by a vast crowd of nobles and ministers came the loftiest elephant of the royal stables, with a golden throne strapped to its back, on which sat the Emperor. On his right, left and rear, rode troops in due order, each division keeping its proper position. From the backs of the elephants handfuls of gold and silver coins were flung among the crowd right and left. In this order the Imperial procession wended its way through the bazars of old Delhi and entered the Fort by the Lahori Gate. Then all dismounted. The Emperor sat down for a while in the Hall of Public and Private Audience in succession. The two halls were lavishly decorated. The musicians played on musical instruments and dancing girls wearing shining jewels and glittering ornaments formed a quadrille and danced with the music. The royal attendants sprinkled scented water on the assembled throng diffusing sweet and refreshing fragrance. Finally, the Emperor returned to the harem.

Visit of Foreign Envoys

Foreign envoys were treated with great courtesy. Special consideration was, however, shown to those from Persia. Elaborate arrangements were made for their reception.

The envoys were required to observe Indian court etiquette. On an ambassador's arrival, an important noble was sent at the head of one thousand horsemen to meet him outside the city and to escort him to the Fort. Soldiers were posted on the two sides of the street, a league in length, through which the ambassador was to pass. The principal streets were tastefully decorated with rich stuff, both in the shops and at the windows of the houses, and the ambassador was escorted by a number of officers with a band of musicians, drummers, pipers and trumpeters. On his entering the Fort or royal palace, he was saluted by the artillery. The whole court was adorned with marvellous things. As soon as the ambassador appeared within sight of the Emperor, he had to make the *salam*. The ambassador would then present a letter which was made over to the prince. The prince presented it to the Emperor who made a sign for its delivery to the eunuch, the head of the Emperor's household. The ambassador thereafter put on a rich set of robes presented to him. The Master of the ceremonies then informed him that he could produce the presents he had brought. The Emperor would see these with curiosity. The ambassador thereafter would come out in the company of several nobles, who conveyed him to a palace, which had been prepared before hand. After some time the ambassador was sent away with gifts which consisted of horses with trappings of a poniard mounted with precious stones, emeralds, jewellery, valuable set of robes and a small escritoire of gold covered with precious stones and a sealed letter for his Master.

Imperial Secretariat

The Mughal rulers had an elaborate administrative system. The Emperor was the supreme authority as Commander-in-Chief and the source of justice and legislation. The main departments of the State were :

1. The Exchequer and Revenue (under the High *Diwan*) ;
2. The Imperial Household (under the *Khan-i-Saman* or High Steward) ;
3. The Military Pay and Accounts Office (under the Imperial *Bakshi*) ;
4. Cannon Law, both Civil and Criminal (under the Chief *Qazi*) ;
5. Religious Endowments and Charity (under the Chief *Sadar*) ;
6. Censorship of Public Morals (under the *Muhtasib*) ;
7. The Artillery (under *Mir Atish* or *Darogha-i-Topkhanah*) ; and
8. Intelligence and Posts (under the *Darogha* and *Dak Chawki*).

There was a large Secretariat to convey the orders of the Emperor and to keep record of all letters received and issued. All official letters had to follow a set form. The Emperor wrote with his own hands replies to certain important letters.

Animal Fights

One of the pastimes of the Emperor was to witness from the *Jharokha* elephant fights which were held in the presence of all the people on the sandy banks of the Jamuna. The principal ladies of the court and the *Omrahs* viewed the spectacle from different apartments in the fortress. On some days as many as five pairs were made to fight in succession. This was the special prerogative of the Emperor, and not even princes and princesses of the blood could order such a fight for themselves.

A wall of earth was raised three or four feet wide and five or six feet high. The two huge beasts met one another face to face on opposite sides of the wall. Each had one or two riders to guide the elephants, either by soothing words, or by chiding them as cowards, and urged them on with their heels, until the beasts attacked each other with great force. They would inflict dreadful wounds and blows with their teeth, their heads and their trunks. There were frequent pauses during the fight. It was sometimes suspended and then renewed with fresh vigour. The stronger elephant passed over the wall to attack the opponent and pursing him fastened upon him with so much obstinacy that the animals could be separated only by means of fire works which were exploded between them. Frequently the riders were trodden under foot and killed on the spot. So dangerous were these combats that on the day of such fights, the riders would take formal leave of their wives and children as if condemned to death. Often some of the spectactors were knocked down and trampled upon by the elephants, or by the crowd who, in order to avoid the infuriated animals took to flight.

At times, bears, goats, rams, wrapped in tiger's skins, were made to attack an elephant. Cocks were specially trained and their fights were arranged before the king.

Hunting

Another favourite pastime of the Mughal Emperors was the hunting excursions. A special site where wild animals of various kinds could be found in abundance was selected for the great hunt. The animals were driven from a vast area by a large number of beaters. Lions were also allured to a particular place in the forest by keeping tied there an ass as bait. The king would then appear in the jungle on an elephant, protected in places with thin plates of iron, and attended by the Grand Master of the Hunt. Some high officials mounted on an elephant and a great number of mace-bearers on horses back and game-keepers on foot, armed with half pikes, accompanied the king. Sighting the lion, the king would immediately fire at him with a large musket. The wounded animal then made a spring at the elephant, but the king continued to discharge his musket, until the lion was killed. The termination of the hunt was attended with great ceremony. The carcase was brought before the king, seated in a general assembly of high officials. It was measured with details of teeth and claws and then it was recorded that such a king on such a day slew a lion of such a description.

Other Amusements

Playing *Chugan* was one of the recreations of the Mughal kings and ladies of the royal household took part in the game. Riding and fishing served as their pastime. Music and dancing, magic shows and acrobatics, theatrical performances were their amusements. Story telling was a favourite with them. Smoking *hukka* and chewing betels was favoured. Cards and chess were popular as indoor games.

Fancy Fair

A fair was held during the festivals in the palace and it was conducted by the handsomest, most highly educated, and cultured of the wives of the *Omrahs* and principal *Mansabdars*. The articles exhibited were beautiful brocades, rich embroideries of the new fashion, turbans, elegantly worked on cloth of gold, fine muslins, worn by women of the nobility and other articles of high price. These bewitching females acted the part of the traders, while the purchasers were the king, the *begums* or princesses and other distinguished ladies of the palace. If any *Omrah*'s wife happened to have a handsome daughter, she never failed to accompany her mother so that she might be seen by the king and become known. The charm of the fair lay in the manner in which the king made his bargains, frequently disputing the value to a penny. He pretended that the good lady was possibly not in earnest, the article was too dear, that it was not equal to that he could find elsewhere and that he could offer no more as a price. The women, on the other hand, endeavoured to sell the article at the price asked. At times the conversation was carried on in Persian verses.

The Imperial Kitchen

The king appointed a sincere man as *Mir Bakawal* or Master of the Kitchen and also gave him several honest and faithful persons as assistants. Cooks were brought from all countries to prepare a great variety of dishes of all kinds of grams, greens, meat, also oily, sweet and spicy dishes. Every day such dishes were prepared as the nobles could scarcely command at their feasts. The victuals were served in dishes of gold and silver, stone and earthen ware; some of the dishes being in the charge of each of the *sub-Bakawals*. When the food was taken out, the cook and the *Bakawal* tasted it, after which it was tasted by the *Mir Bakawal* and then put into the dishes. The gold and silver dishes were tied up in red clothes and those of copper and china in white ones. The *Mir Bakawal* attached his seal, and wrote the names of the contents. The dishes were carried by the *Bakawals*, the cooks and other servants, and a few bearers preceded and followed to prevent people from approaching them. The servants of the palace again tasted the food, spread the table-cloth on the ground and arranged the dishes. Often the queen or the eldest daughter sat opposite the king in attendance. Some dishes were also kept half ready, should any of these be called for. As a great favour the king sent these, or whatever was left over, to the queens, the princesses and the captains of the guard. This honour was always dearly paid for, since the servants who conveyed the food never failed to get themselves well rewarded.

Miscellaneous Departments and Karkhanajat

The standard of the articles and services required by the Emperor and the Royal Family were so large that no private agency could meet the demand with a reasonable degree of satisfaction. To cater for their fastidious tastes, everything consumed by them was produced by the various Departments or *Karkhanajat* which were more than a hundred in number.

The Treasury stored valuables of all kinds, coins of gold and silver, precious stones, and articles of rare workmanship.

Several departments were concerned with the royal table, such as Kitchen, *Nanba-khana* (Bakery), *Hawaij-khana* (for pot-herbs, seasonings, sweets, etc.), *Mewa-khana* (Fruitery), *Abdar-khana* (for water), *Rikab-khana* (Pantry), and *Aftabchi-khana* (for ewers etc.). Other departments were *Sharbat-khana* (for *sharbat* and other beverages), and *Tambul-khana* (for betel leaves). Lighting up was in charge of *Chiragh-khana* (lamps) and *Mashal-khana* (torches) ; while *Khwushbu-khana* (perfumery) supplied scents, *itrs* essences and oils. The *karkhanas* concerned with the weaving of textile fabrics and the needle work—were *Farrash-khana* (for tents and carpets), *Kurkyaraq-khana* and *Tushak-khana* (for dresses and stuffs of all kinds used for wearing-apparel etc.), and the shawl departments. In other workshops skilful artists and artisans worked in metal, stone, ivory and other substances ; and perfection in the fineness of art was attained in the work of goldsmiths and painters. Each department was conducted and supervised by master workers of established reputation. Bernier mentioned about the *karkhanajat* as follows, "Large halls are seen in many places, called *Kar-kanays* or workshops for the artisans. In one hall embroiderers are busily employed, superintended by a master. In another, you see the goldsmiths ; in a third painters ; in a fourth, varnishers in lacquer-work ; in a fifth, joiners, turners, tailors and shoe-makers ; in a sixth, manufacturers of silk, brocade, and those fine muslins of which are made turbans, girdles with golden flowers, and drawers worn by females, so delicately fine as frequently to wear out in one night. This article of dress, which lasts only a few hours, may cost ten or twelve crowns, and even more, when beautifully embroidered with needle-work. The artisans repair every morning to their respective Kar-kanays, where they remain employed the whole day ; and in the evening return to their homes."

A large number of animals were kept and fed in the fort-palace : elephants, horses, camels, mules and cattle, were for use, and were lodged in stables. Leopards, deer, dogs, hawks and falcons, were trained for hunting. Various types of birds were kept for amusement. Another important department was the Library which was one of the finest manuscripts library in the world.

IV

THE PALACE

The royal household of the Mughal Emperor had the same air of grandeur and majesty as the court. There were separate apartments for the king, the queen, the princes and the princesses. All these palaces were full of gardens with running water which flowed in channels into reservoirs of stone, jasper and marble. In these palaces were seats and private rooms, some of which were in the midst of the running water. Fish of golden colour were put in water for delight. In the royal palaces the king took rest wherever it pleased him. Inspite of his being well guarded, he continuously changed the place at various times for fear of any treachery.

These palaces had large, spacious halls made of the finest marble, engraved with gold and were sumptuously and elegantly decorated. The floor was covered with rich embroidered Persian carpets so thick and soft that feet would sink in them and the heaviest steps could not be heard. The bases of the columns of the hall were decorated with hollow silver pedestals in which different sweet perfumeries were burnt. Gorgeous tapestries, mirrors and furniture, rich in crimson velvet embellished the hall. A chandelier with many arms emitting beautiful light hung from the ceiling in the centre of the hall. The golden lamps fed with perfumed oil diffused a delicious odour. Several pictures, as the finest works of art, adorned the walls. Betel-boxes, *Itardans*, flower pots, narcissus-pots, inlaid with gold and studded with precious stones, and silver spittoons were arranged in order. On a small low table were placed water melons and golden grapes from Kabul, guava, mango and pistachio nuts, also candid dates and apricots from Basra and Iran. A flask of gold held precious wine. In one corner of the hall lay a *divan* on which the queen or the princess could lie to take rest. Pillows of various shapes and designs, covered with velvet of a superior quality, were placed all around on the carpet in the centre of the hall. A queen or a princess would sit on the carpet, leaning upon a pillow and enjoying music. One or two beautiful maids decently dressed, fanned her with a gold embroidered fan. Dancing girls with their gauzy dresses, dipped in scented oil, and almond flowers stuck in their tresses, wearing all the jewels, were in attendance. A story teller at nightlulled them to sleep. At night red and blue bowls with burning wicks were placed along side the walls of the palace.

The queen and the princesses had usually ten or twelve women servants attached to each of them. Besides, there were the matrons or *darogas*, who looked after all arrangements in the palaces. The inside of the palaces was guarded by sober and active women, the most trust-worthy of them were placed about the apartment of the Emperor. Outside these palaces eunuchs were posted and at a proper distance a guard of faithful Rajputs kept vigil, beyond whom were the porters of the gate. All the sides of the palaces were guarded by troops. The Emperor kept his own watch too. Whenever *begums*, or wives of the nobles desired to be presented, they first notified the guards their wish and waited in their palanquin for a reply. Their request was then passed on to the officials of the palace, and those eligible were permitted to enter. Some women of high rank obtained permission to remain there for a whole month.

The queens and princesses received pay or pension according to their birth or rank. In addition, they often received from the king special presents in cash. A *Tahwildar* (Cash-keeper) and a writer were attached to each of the palaces. If a woman wanted anything within the limit of her salary, she applied to the *Tahwildar*. The *Tahwildar* sent a memorandum to the writer, who checked it, and the General Treasurer made the payment in cash.

V

THE PRINCE

At the birth of a prince, there were great rejoicings in the palace lasting for several days. Instruments were played upon and music resounded. The dancing and singing girls sang to complement the queen and the princesses, and received handsome rewards from them. The nobles appeared to offer their congratulations to the king, bringing presents, either in jewels, money, elephants, or horses. The king gave a name to the infant and fixed his allowance, which was always more than that given to the highest general in the army. When a son was born to any of the princes, it was the grand-father who fixed the child's name. He also granted an allowance which was much less than that given to his own children. The child's father also assigned some income to support an establishment for the child. This continued until he was of marriageable age, and then he was given a grander retinue.

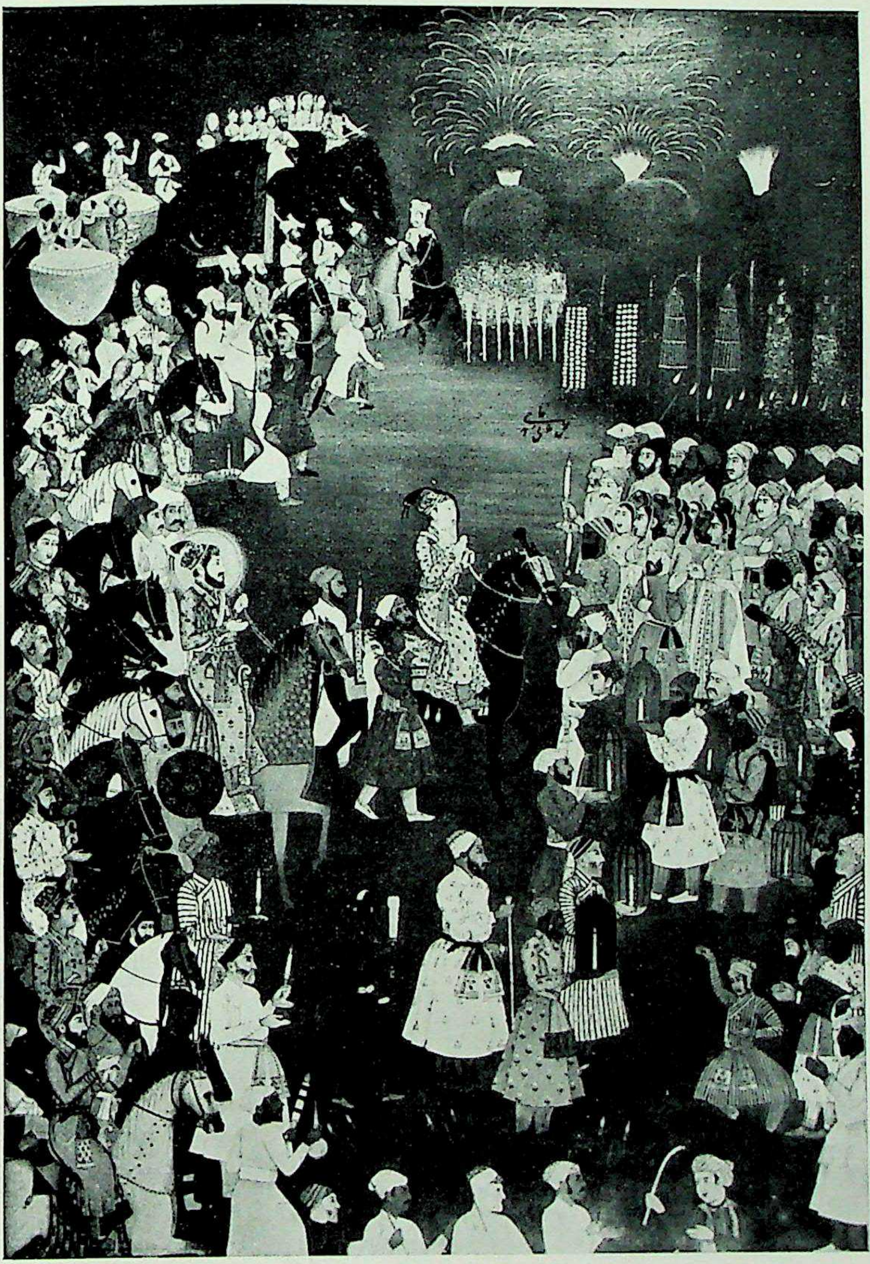
Education

When the little princes had reached the age of five, they were taught to read and write the paternal tongue which was Tartar. After this, they were placed under the charge of learned men and eunuchs, who brought them up with great strictness and taught them liberal and military arts. The teachers took the greatest care to prevent the princes from acquiring bad habits.

They would conduct before them legal arguments, after which judgements were pronounced. They showed them combats and fights. When the king went out to hunt or to visit a mosque, he took these young princes with him. They were brought up in this manner inside the palace until the age of sixteen years.

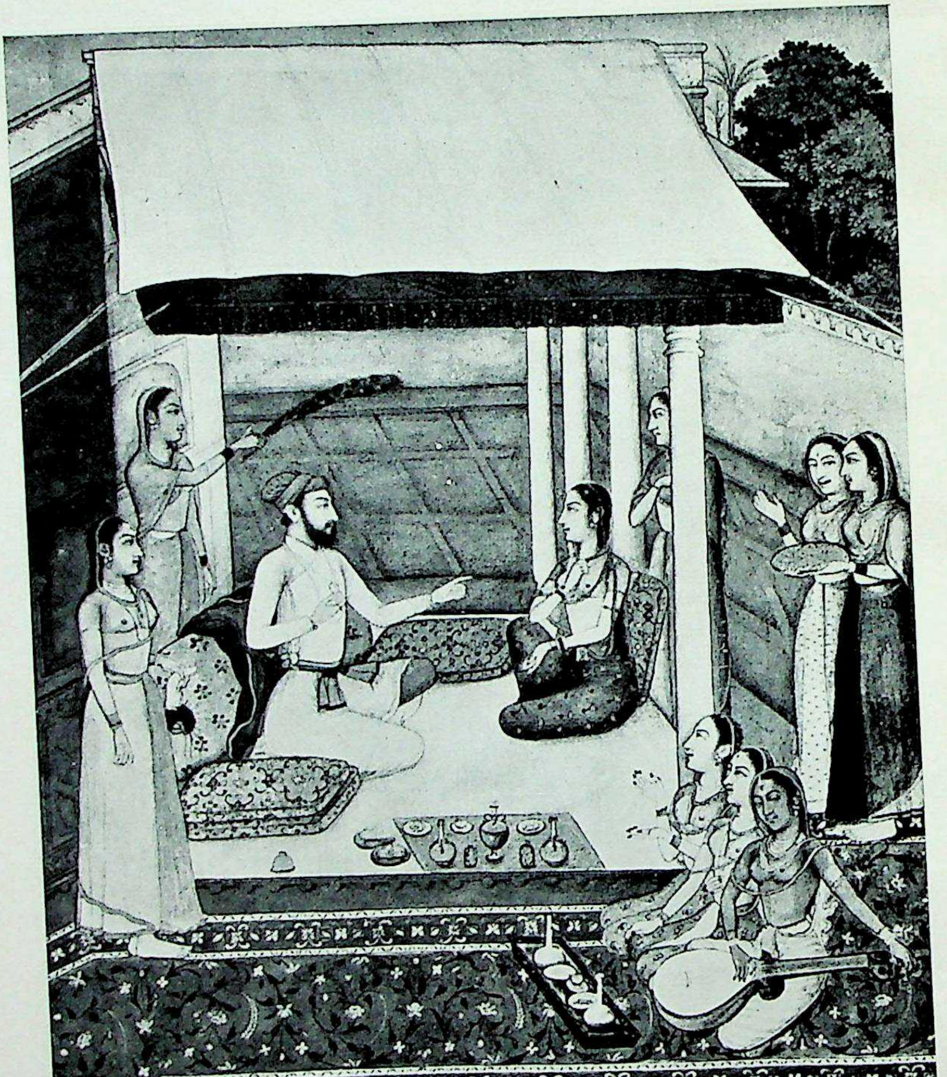
Wedding

The princes were usually married about the age of sixteen. Their marriages were arranged by the king himself. As soon as the engagement was settled, a betrothal ceremony took place and a date for the wedding was fixed. The Emperor then gave orders to obtain precious articles from various places, and officers of the Imperial household department were instructed to make jewellery and silver and gold utensils. At the auspicious time, the *hinabandi* ceremony was performed by the ladies. Betel leaves, cardamoms and dry fruits were distributed among the attendants of the court. Next day, the other princes and nobles repaired to the house of bridegroom to congratulate him and offer him wedding presents. Then a magnificent procession was formed. The bridegroom mounted an elephant, the courtiers following him in glittering array, some on horses, others on foot. The bridegroom was then conducted to the Hall of Public Audience where the king gave him his presents and also bound on his fore-head, the *sehra* of pearls, emeralds and rubies. The marriage procession then paraded the streets of the capital with music, lights and discharge of fire-works. When it reached the bride's house, the guests were made welcome and entertained by her father. Music, dancing and other entertainments continued till about midnight which was the auspicious hour for the ceremony of wedlock. At the appointed hours, the *Qazi* read the marriage service in the presence of the Emperor. The bridegroom then promised a wedding gift of a few lakhs of rupees. Gold and



Wedding procession of a prince

Plate IV

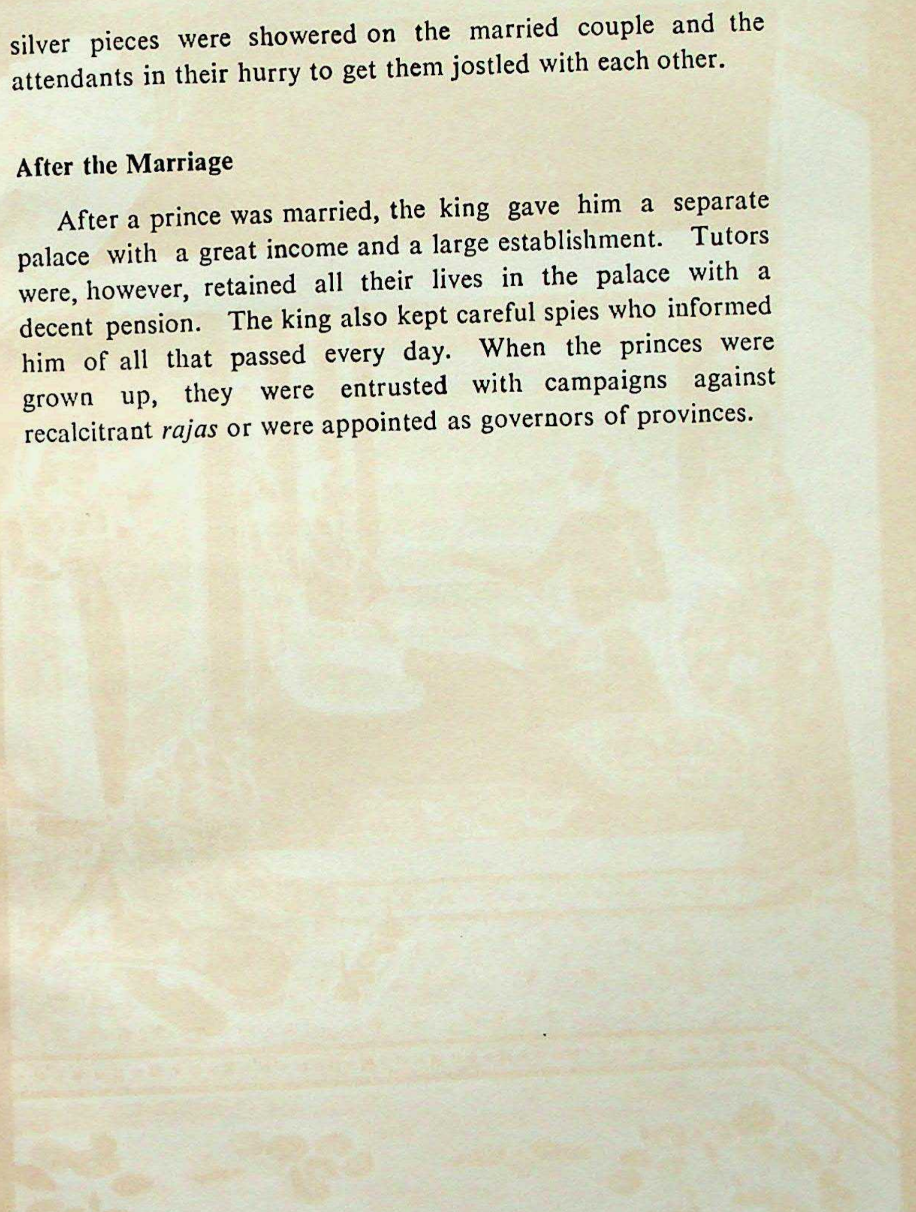


A prince and a princess enjoying music

silver pieces were showered on the married couple and the attendants in their hurry to get them jostled with each other.

After the Marriage

After a prince was married, the king gave him a separate palace with a great income and a large establishment. Tutors were, however, retained all their lives in the palace with a decent pension. The king also kept careful spies who informed him of all that passed every day. When the princes were grown up, they were entrusted with campaigns against recalcitrant *rajas* or were appointed as governors of provinces.



VI

THE PRINCESS

Birth

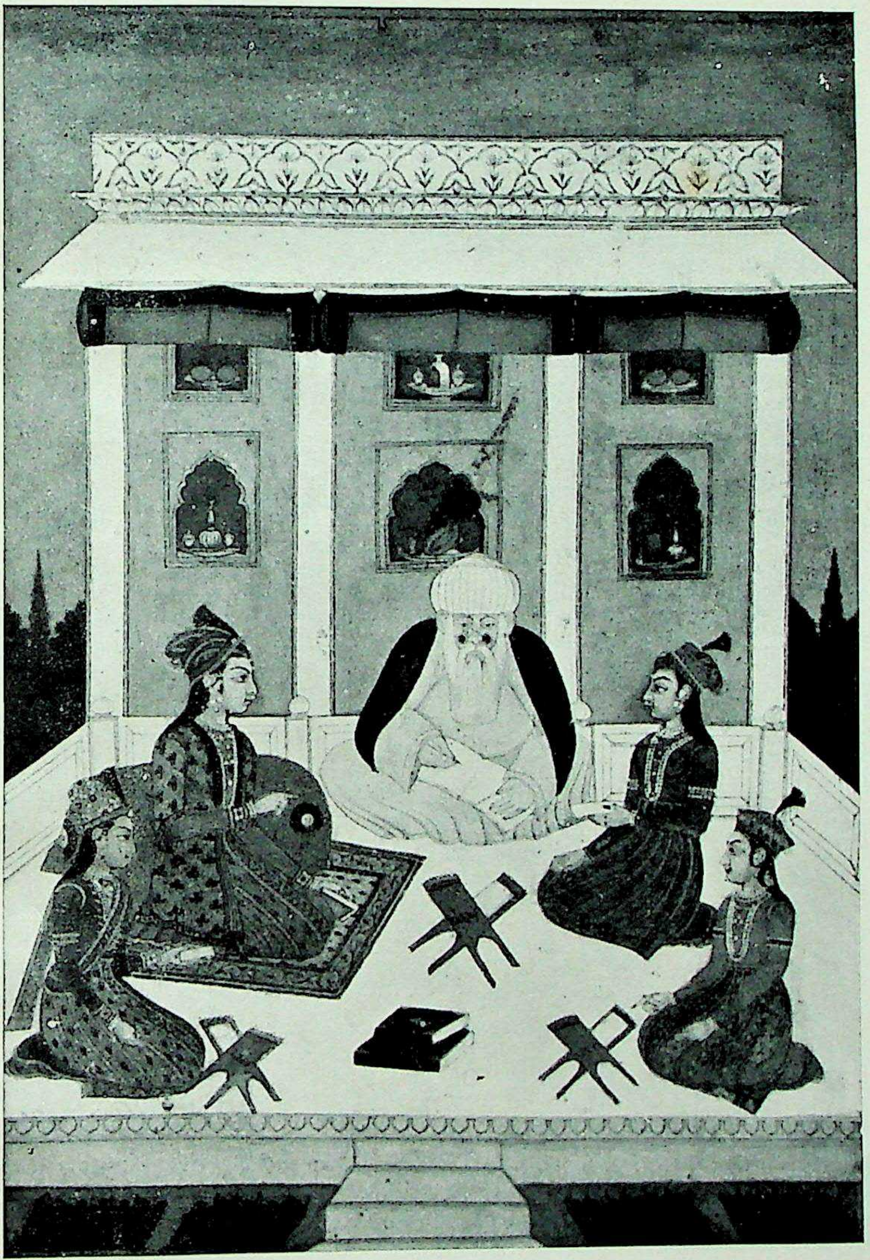
The Mughal princesses lived in a magnificent style. The birth of a daughter was not unwelcomed and on such occasions ladies in the palace rejoiced, incurring great expenses to mark their joy. The princesses lived in the harem with their mothers till they were fifteen or sixteen years old when they had their separate palaces. A number of women servants looked after them.

Education

The Mughal emperors were men of literary tastes and took keen interest in the education of their children. Highly educated tutoresses were engaged to teach them. Aged male tutors, celebrated for their literary achievement, were also employed to impart higher learning to them and an elder princess or the queen supervised the tuition. In the palace, there was a vast library, containing works on diverse subjects.

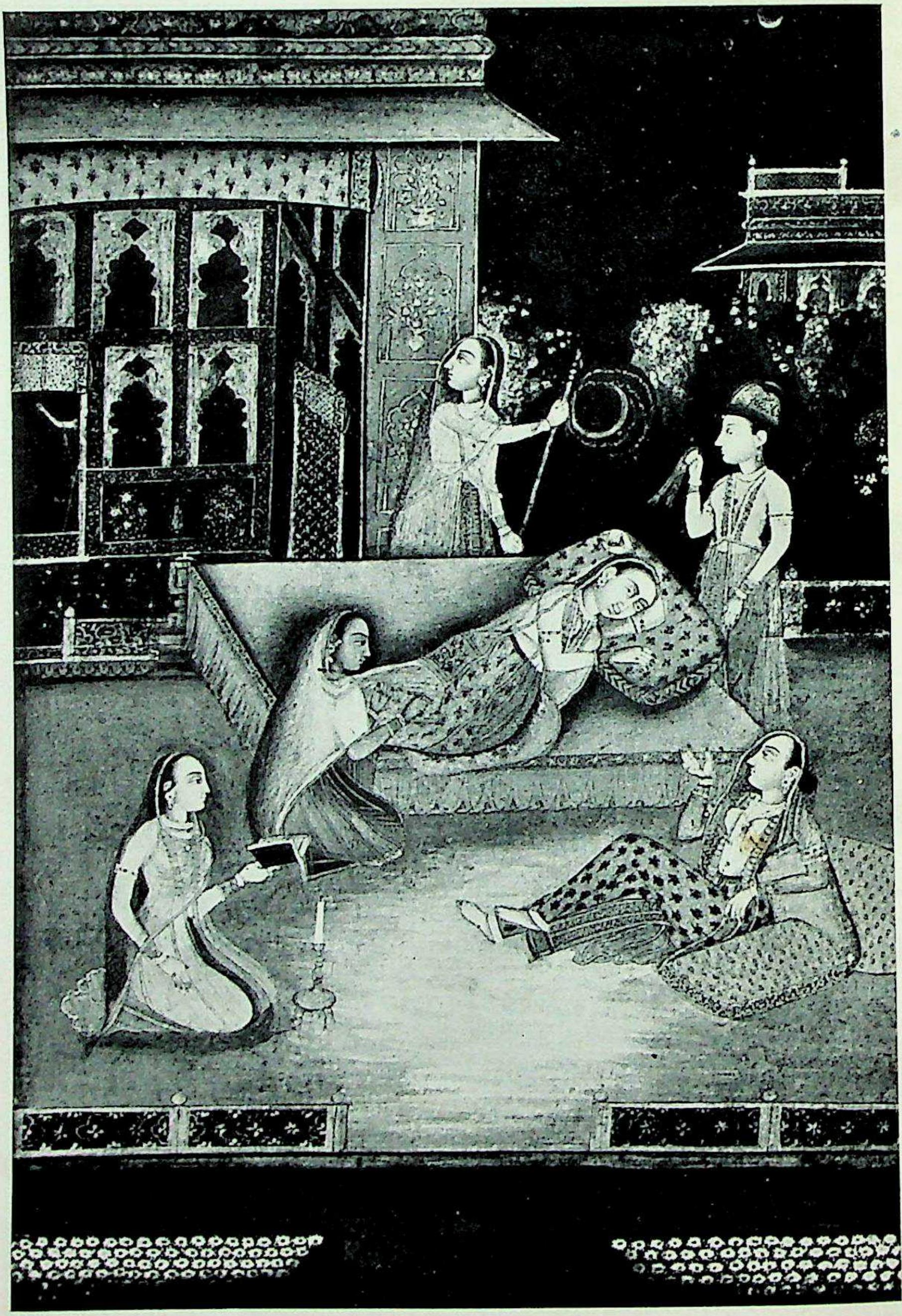
As grown up

The princesses were married at the age of fifteen. Some



Schooling of princesses

Plate VI



A princess retires at night

of them, however, remained unmarried throughout life and spent their time either in literary pursuits or in amusements for which every arrangement was made. Each had a set of female musicians to gladen their hearts. They played cards or chess and enjoyed riding or other out-door games like *chugan*. They spent their time in listening to tales and stories of love, or recline lying upon beds of flowers, or walking about in gardens, or listening to the murmur of the running water. At night, their amusement was generally to have large torches lighted or to enjoy fire-works.

Ornaments and Jewellery

All the princesses had six to eight sets of jewels. The goldsmiths were continuously busy with the making of ornaments in the Fort. The best and the most costly of their productions were for the king's person, the queens and the princesses. The princesses usually wore necklaces of jewels like scarves, on both shoulders, added to three strings of pearls on each side. They had three to five rows of pearls hanging from their neck, coming down far below the waist. Upon the middle of the head was a cluster of pearls which hung down as far as the centre of the forehead, with a valuable ornament of costly stones formed into the shape of the sun, or moon, or some star, or at times imitating different flowers. On the right side, they had a little round ornament, in which a small ruby was inserted between two pearls. In their ears were valuable stones, round the neck large pearls or strings of precious stones, and over these a valuable ornament having in its centre a big diamond, or ruby, or emerald, or sapphire, and round it big pearls.

They wore on their arms, above the elbow, rich armlets two inches wide, enriched on the surface with stones, and with small bunches of pearls, hanging from them. At their wrists were very rich bracelets or bands of pearls, which could go round nine or twelve times. In this way they often had the place for feeling the pulse covered up. In their fingers were rich rings, and on the right thumb there was always a ring where, in place of a stone, there was mounted a little round mirror, having pearls around it. This mirror they used to look at themselves, an act of which they were very fond, at any and every moment. In addition they were girded with a sort of waist-belt of gold four fingers wide, covered all over with great stones. At the ends of the strings which tie up their drawers, there were bunches of pearls made of fifteen strings five fingers in length. Round the bottom of their legs were valuable metal rings or strings of costly pearls. The princesses made it one of their diversions to examine and to show to each other their jewellery.

Dresses

The dresses of the ladies were superb and costly, perfumed with essence of roses. These were made of so thin a raiment that their skins shone through. Ordinarily they wore two, or even three, garments each weighing not more than one ounce, and worth forty to fifty rupees each, excluding the cost of gold lace. They wore bodice of brocade lined with pearls and kept together with a beautifully wrought clasp in diamonds and emeralds. Every day they changed their dresses several times. They slept in these clothes and never put them on again, but gave them away to their servants. They adorned their persons with a huge mass of jewels and coloured their hands and feet with *Mehandy*, a leafy powder.

Their hair was very well dressed, plaited, and perfumed with scented oil. They covered their heads with a sheet of cloth of gold, and these were of different types and colours. Above their other clothes, they put on fine shawls, so thin that these could be passed through a small finger ring. During the winter they wore the same clothes, covering themselves on the top of the other things, however, with a woolen shawl of fine Kashmiri make. Some of the princesses wore turban with the king's permission. On the turban was a valuable aigrette, surrounded by pearls and precious stones. They lived with no cares or anxieties, occupying themselves with nothing beyond displaying great show and magnificence, in imposing and majestuous bearing, or making themselves attractive, and getting talked about in the world.

VII

INTRIGUES IN THE PALACE

The princes and princesses led a life of luxury, with all sorts of imaginable comforts. The peace and tranquility in the palace was often disturbed by intrigues of the princes who were ever keen to have an ascendancy in the court and the princesses who desired to control the affairs of the harem, Shahjahan's sons—Dara, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad, were often intriguing against each other. Of the daughters, Jahanara sided with Dara and Roshanara favoured Aurangzeb. Dara, who stayed at the court, was ever anxious to bring about the discomfiture of Aurangzeb. Roshanara was in correspondence with Aurangzeb and kept him informed of the affairs of the court. When Aurangzeb occupied the throne of India, Roshanara was allowed an extensive establishment. She drew enormous allowances and enjoyed all the privileges of a queen of the first rank.

In the year 1664, Aurangzeb suddenly fell ill. He sank into a state of unconsciousness. Roshanara was in sole charge of his chamber which was guarded by Tartar women, armed with swords and bows. The strictest secrecy was observed as to the state of the Emperor's health, and not even the ladies of the palace knew whether the emperor was alive or dead. Believing that there was no hope of her brother surviving, Roshanara Begum took away the royal seal and wrote to various Rajas, Viceroys and Governors in favour of Azim Shah (Aurangzeb's third son), then nine years of age and actually living in the harem. The ladies of the palace feeling suspicious of what was going on, the *Begum* heavily bribed the female guards at the doors of the royal chamber and they allowed her admittance to it. The *Begum* told Roshanara, what she was doing was not right, as this would cause confusion and disquiet in the empire while the king was still alive and there was hope of his recovery. Having said this, she proceeded to the King's bedside, but Roshanara boldly seized her by the hair and ejected her from the room. The queen, not to afflict her suffering husband, bore it quietly and patiently. Soon after, however, Aurangzeb recovered and gave public audience in the *Diwan-i-Amm* where all were admitted. He also obtained from the eunuch an account of all that Roshanara had done during his illness. Roshanara lost much of the love that Aurangzeb had borne for her. To console the *Begum*, he conferred on her new titles and honours and eulogized her patience under adverse circumstances. Roshanara feeling herself mortified, intimated her desire to leave the Fort and live in a separate palace, but her request was refused on the ground that she had to supervise the tuition of the king's younger daughters. Not long afterwards Roshanara died. It was said that she was removed by poison.

Aurangzeb's sons Sultan, Muazzam, Azam, Kam Baksh and Akbar had their mutual jealousies. Of the daughters Zebun-nisa held an important position in the harem. She was secretly in correspondence with her brother Akbar who had rebelled, and on that account she had the full weight of her father's wrath. Her property and pension of four lakhs a year were attached and she was imprisoned for the rest of her life (1681-1702). At the news of her death, the Emperor, himself on the brink of the grave, shed tears and ordered money to be distributed in charity for the good of her soul.

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क्रम 3445
प्राप्ति तिथि 24 7 69
Museum, Library,

Published by Dr. N. L. Mathur, National Museum, New Delhi
Printed at Printcraft, Puri Building, Deshbandhu Gupta Road
New Delhi